

Selecting the All Important Greensmower

LLOYD WOODS, NATIONAL GREENS ADVISOR, BOWLS CANADA BOULINGRIN

What's New?

There is no doubt that greensmowers have become much more sophisticated than they formerly were. An important feature, the grooming reel, has come into greater use and most manufacturers now offer this device as an option. The groomer is a reel with vertical blades (or tines) located between the front roller and the cutting cylinder. It is used in conjunction with a Wiehle roller (one consisting of a series of disks) and lifts the grass to allow better mowing of the lateral growth that inevitably plagues greens to a greater or lesser extent. Reducing the recumbent growth increases the pace of the green somewhat and also improves the appearance of the turf. It is important to note that the groomer is not capable of removing thatch, therefore does not in any way replace the verticutter.

Secondly, there has been a general increase in the number of blades in the cutting cylinder to give more clips per inch at a given rate of travel and thereby a finer cut. Many manufacturers have embraced this trend. Most also offer a selection of bottom blades. The thinnest ones sometimes termed 'tournament blades,' permit closer mowing which not only improves the appearance of the turf but can also increase the pace of the green to some degree.

Another welcome improvement has been the introduction of better gasoline

engines which are lighter, run more quietly, are easier to crank and start more reliably. Honda and Kawasaki are good examples of the better engines now available.

Many engines also feature low-oil switches which prevent them from running if the crankcase oil drops below a safe operating level.

A Great Deal of Choice

For a number of years, most clubs relied on the Scott Bonnar 'Queen' – an Australian mower specifically designed for bowling green maintenance. This mower has served well and remains the one most frequently used on bowling greens across Canada. It is the heaviest of all greensmowers at about 400 lbs and the only one powered by an electric motor although more recently a conversion kit has become available to fit the Scott Bonnar with a gasoline engine thus removing the inconveniences associated with the long power cord.

Quite a number of clubs are now using mowers other than the Scott Bonnar machine. They are all gasoline powered, lighter, more maneuverable, and some have features not available on the 'Queen.' A lighter mower causes less soil compaction when mowing in wet conditions and requires less strength and agility to operate which could be an important



factor in cases where volunteers, particularly seniors, are called upon to look after the green.

ATCO, Bannerman, Jacobsen (Textron), John Deere, Toro and Thomas Green are some of the manufacturers, in addition to Scott Bonnar, which produce walk-behind greensmowers. All of these mowers (and perhaps other, less well known ones) have their pros and cons and are worthy of investigation.

As an example, the Scott Bonnar has a 30" width of cut while most of the others are only 22" wide. However, due to the ease of operation of the lighter mowers, the mowing time for a green is about the same for either type. Also, using the electric mower requires laying the power cord while the gasoline mowers, of course, do not require this operation.

Is Your Present Mower Satisfactory?

If your present greensmower is doing a good job, it is obvious that you do not need to consider spending the \$6,000 to \$10,000 required to purchase a new one.

If your mower is NOT mowing satisfactorily but is otherwise mechanically sound, a change to your equipment maintenance practices is indicated. You should make certain that:

- the reel is sharp;
- the bedknife is in good condition;

NOW AVAILABLE!

Understanding

Turf Management by Dr. R.W. Sheard

A practical manual for the management of safer, natural turf facilities for outdoor sports. The concepts are applicable for any turf manager – from golf course superintendents to the parks supervisor – whether maintaining golf greens, sports fields or race tracks for thoroughbreds.

• 24 chapters • 161 pages

ORDER FORM (please print) Please send me ___ copies.

• \$30 – STA members and orders exceeding 10 copies

• \$35 – Others

Shipping and handling: \$2.50 for 1 copy

Please contact the STA office for multiple copy rates.

(No GST*)

TOTAL _____

*STA is a public service body with annual worldwide supplies of goods and services of less than \$50,000



Name _____

Facility/Company _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Make your cheque or money order payable to **The Sports Turf Association**, and mail to:
Sports Turf Association, 328 Victoria Road South, Guelph, ON N1H 6H8

For more information: Ph: 519-763-9431 • Fax: 519-766-1704 • Email: sta@gti.uoguelph.ca

Published with the generous support of



• the reel to bedknife clearance is adjusted properly.

Once the reel and bedknife are put in good condition they should be kept that way by backlapping and adjusting the reel-to-bedknife clearance every week or two.

Is a New Mower in Your Future?

If you feel a new mower is warranted, then you should begin with a thorough investigation of the ones available to find the mower most suited to your requirements – and your budget!

When your investigation is complete, you may find that the Scott Bonnar is the



Quite a number of clubs are now using mowers other than the Scott Bonnar machine.

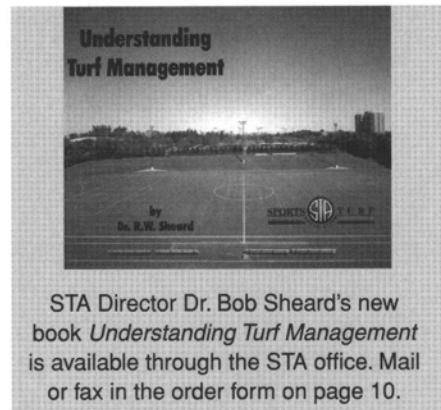
mower for you or perhaps you will favour one of the lighter gasoline powered mowers. If the latter is the case, you should consider ordering it with a grooming reel and Wiehle roller installed and also specify a tournament blade. This would be a top-of-the-line mower and therefore at the higher end of the price range noted previ-

ously but has the potential to do an excellent job.

You would probably find that a greensmower of this type would be easier to use, particularly for volunteers as noted above. The grooming reel, used on a regular basis, would keep lateral growth to a minimum, and the thinner blade would allow mowing at 1/8" or even closer for special events.

A Final Word

Remember, whether you continue to use your present mower or buy a new one of any make, proper maintenance is a MUST if you are to get good results. Anyone with some mechanical ability can learn to do routine maintenance and a half hour spent each week or two, plus some additional time to change the bottom blade once per season, will pay rich dividends. Refer to the manual *Bowling Green Maintenance and Management* available through Bowls Canada, phone 613- 244-0021, email office@bowlscanada.com. Chapter 15 outlines the procedure for backlapping, reel-to-bedknife adjustment and bedknife replacement. Please feel free to browse through our website at www.bowlscanada.com. ♦



STA Director Dr. Bob Sheard's new book *Understanding Turf Management* is available through the STA office. Mail or fax in the order form on page 10.

WELCOME STA NEW MEMBERS

Vincent Lickers
Maintenance Team Leader
Six Nations Parks and Recreation
Ohsweken, ON

Rob Watson
Program Standards &
Development Officer
City of Toronto, ON



TORO® - New & used turf equipment & irrigation products
PAR EX® - Slow release professional fertilizers
MILORGANITE® - Natural organic fertilizers
YAMAHA® - New golf cars & utility vehicles
E-Z-GO® - New golf cars & utility vehicles

TURF CARE PRODUCTS CANADA

200 Pony Drive, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 7B6

Phone: 905-836-0988 • Fax: 905-836-6442 • www.turfcare.ca



United
Horticultural Supply

Evertt Nieuwkoop
519-420-0080

Tami Packham
519-588-1275

Phone: 1-800-328-4678

- Plant Protection Products
- Granular, Liquid, & Organic Fertilizers
- Turf Seed

Bruce Sheppard
519-660-9037

Dave Cowan
905-242-0785

OR

Fax: 1-800-922-2622



Red and grey clay products designed for baseball, cricket and tennis, along with groundskeeping tools and accessories.

MAR-CO CLAY PRODUCTS INC.

Tel. 519-669-3657 Fax: 519-669-8799

www.marcoclay.on.ca

PICKSEED®
good things growing ...

PICKSEED Canada Inc.
Box 304
Lindsay, ON K9V 4S3

1-800-661-4769
FAX (705) 878-9249

Doug MacMillan
Lindsay, ON
Cell: 705-878-6426

Larry White
London, ON
Cell: 519-649-8777

Jason Lehman
Kingston, ON
Cell: 613-328-1628